

State Controller Unveils Mandate Website

The State Controller John Chiang has taken several steps to provide more information to the education community regarding his office's role in disbursing, reporting, and auditing state mandate reimbursements. Recently, the State Controller's Office (SCO) unveiled a newly organized website dedicated to mandated costs. This site contains reports to the Legislature on payments and appropriations, a summary of mandate test claims, mandate cost manuals, and mandate audit reports. In addition, the site allows readers to sign up to receive automatic updates to the mandated cost page. Go to <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/mancost/index.shtml> to access the information.

Furthermore, the Controller and his staff have been making themselves available to improve communications with the field. Earlier this month, the Controller addressed a session of school business officials at the CASBO Conference in San Jose, presenting his views on the mandate audits and other related topics, and his staff participated in a workshop dedicated to the audits.

The Controller is also sponsoring legislation—AB 1698 (Eng, D-Monterey Park)—which is intended to align state statutes and the parameters and guidelines for the Notification of Truancy mandate. The Controller has indicated that, because the current parameters and guidelines reflect state statutes that are no longer in force because of subsequent amendments, his auditors are finding unintended audit exceptions for claims on this mandate. AB 1698 is intended to remedy this discrepancy.

Finally, SCO staff recently met with several School Services' staff members to discuss the need to improve communications on the audit process. This meeting, while not yielding specific commitments to change the audit process, provided an opportunity to build upon the recent efforts of the office and hopefully will resolve some of the problems that have plagued state mandates for too long.

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